

- Institutionalize community, private, and County collaboration via program and service design processes.

In addition, there are a number of community-based planning activities that County departments may want FRCs to participate in, including, but not limited to:

- Assessing community/service needs;
- Identifying appropriate community members to evaluate contract proposals;
- Soliciting input from community residents;
- Providing feedback on upcoming services or proposals;
- Advising on the need to expand/create department operated/administered programs;
- Reviewing policy/legislation;
- Evaluating existing programs/services;
- Assisting with the design/development of new programs/services;
- Gathering data on community needs;
- Providing input for strategic planning purposes; and
- Responding to a request from the Board of Supervisors.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN PARTNERING WITH FRCs

While the involvement of FRCs within County planning processes is highly encouraged, it is important to remember that their level of participation should be balanced against any potential conflict of interest that may arise. For example, including FRCs in an RFP design process may be considered a conflict of interest if the same entities are expected to bid for the contract they helped design. On the other hand, their involvement may be considered appropriate if it is limited to assessing community needs. It is highly recommended that any potential issues regarding conflict of interests be cleared with County Counsel as a first step.

NEED TO KNOW MORE?

For more information regarding FRCs and the recommendations adopted by the Board, on September 4, 2001, please refer to the Children's Planning Council's Web site at:

www.childrensplanningcouncil.org

If you have any questions or need technical assistance regarding FRCs, please contact Ms. Toni Saenz Yaffe, Children's Planning Council, at **Tsyaffe@earthlink.net** or (213) 893-0421.



UNDERSTANDING AND PARTNERING WITH FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS (FRCs)

On September 4, 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted recommendations to encourage the delivery of high-quality, integrated, community-based services in partnership with Family Resource Centers (FRCs). This brochure has been developed to assist County departments and agencies to better understand FRCs and the family support principles that guide them and to identify ways to begin partnering with existing FRCs. The adoption of these recommendations – particularly the Family Support Principles – represents an important strategy toward the development of a more integrated and effective County health and human services delivery system. It also represents a commitment to strengthen and support families in an effort to improve outcomes for children.

WHAT ARE FRCs?

FRCs are community-based entities that serve families by building on their capacities and addressing their needs as defined by the families themselves and the communities in which they live. They are places in neighborhoods where families can go to help strengthen their roles as parents, nurturers, and providers. They are places where programs offer a broad range of services and supports that focus on preventing problems and strengthening a parent's ability to raise healthy children. They are also places that strive to contribute to the community-building process. Because FRCs meet the needs as defined by the community, there is no "cookie-cutter" model or approach. Comprehensive and family service FRCs are guided by nine "family support" principles, as described below.

FRCs: PREMISES AND PRINCIPLES (Family Support America 1996 Guidelines for Family Support Practice)

The nine family support principles – developed over a decade by Family Support America¹ and adopted by the Board of Supervisors as the foundation for supporting the development of high-quality FRCs – are based on the premise that the best way to nurture and protect children is through nurturing and protecting their families. FRCs accomplish this by applying several basic principles:

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.
2. Staff enhance a family's capacity to support the growth and development of all family members – adults, youth, and children.
3. Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
4. Programs affirm and strengthen a family's cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.

¹See the *Family Support America* Web site (www.familysupportamerica.org) for more information.

- 5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
- 6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
- 7. Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
- 8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.
- 9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

FRCs AND A MORE INTEGRATED HUMAN SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

FRCs contribute to the County’s service integration efforts to achieve better outcomes for children and families in the following ways:

PROGRAM AND SERVICE PLANNING/DESIGN

- Help identify the service needs for a particular community and bringing consumer and community viewpoints into the development of these services.
- Include County services in a comprehensive strategy to improve the lives of children and families.
- Improve access by providing community-based support and services.
- Reinforce the need to develop and use indicators that measure critical aspects of family and community self-sufficiency, such as affordable housing, clean and safe streets, and adequate family income.
- Promote the use of outcomes that measure the effectiveness of strengths-based, family-focused services.
- Provide access to an informed and involved client-base that may otherwise not be accessible through normal County outreach efforts.

ACCESS TO LOCAL RESOURCES/INFRASTRUCTURES

- Assist with the development of relationships outside of County agencies that can help support families, e.g., faith-based organizations, businesses, social clubs, etc.
- Serve as a networking hub of service providers who can contribute to service integration by offering supports and services the County does not provide.
- Provide space with other community-based organizations, service providers, faith-based organizations, schools, businesses, and the County to ensure that services are comprehensive and integrated.
- Provide family-friendly space for the co-location of services within the community.

LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Help County departments implement strengths-based, family-driven, family-focused, prevention-oriented programs that promote family and community empowerment and that foster peer and community support.
- Model approaches to families and neighborhoods that are holistic and strengths-based.
- Build community capacity by integrating community economic development in the design of programs and services.
- Organize and mobilize communities to improve the neighborhoods where families live and raise their children.

HOW CAN DEPARTMENTS PARTNER WITH FRCs?

The Board’s adoption of the recommendations presented by the Children’s Planning Council (CPC) were designed to: encourage FRCs to progress along a developmental continuum; maximize their potential to contribute to the County’s service integration efforts; achieve better outcomes for children and families; and leverage partnerships with other key stakeholders.

As a place to start, the Board of Supervisors is requesting County departments to strengthen partnerships with existing high-quality FRCs as a way to support their work in serving children and families. Below are some ways in which these partnerships can begin to take shape:

- Implement and promote the Family Support America 1996 Guidelines for Family Support Practice (as outlined earlier) to encourage and identify high-quality FRCs.
- Include in the criteria for the selection of community-based contractors the ability to provide a more holistic service continuum that is child-focused, family-oriented, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and based on the realities of the communities to be served.
- Encourage partnerships between schools and providers.
- Support the development of long-term grant/application formats that would allow contractors greater flexibility for planning, relationship-building, cross-training, and mid-course correctional adjustments to their program and budgets.
- Streamline contracts and grants requirements, evaluations and reporting processes to the extent allowed by State and Federal laws and regulations.
- Help develop customized training and technical assistance sessions on grant writing, project design/development and outcome evaluation plans that would encourage the development of FRCs and/or other providers who adhere to the FRC principles (as outlined earlier).
- Encourage participation of FRC staff and community residents in joint County-community training and technical assistance programs.
- Assist with the identification of needed areas for capacity and leadership development programs that would include parents and community residents.
 - Investigate the ability to build-in grant incentives for community-based contractors to include parents in their governance structures.